

MGGC

2025 NO.2

Miyagi Goodwill Guide Club Newsletter
(HP ; <http://mggc2019.masa-mune.jp/index.htm>)

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Guide Report

Guided two couples from Hawaii

Shoji Matsuda

This guide request was made by Ms. It was from Chiaki Look. We were four guides: Chiaki, her husband, and her husband's sister and her husband. Chiaki was born in Japan, has lived in Hawaii since she was 10, and is said to speak simple Japanese. And for good reason—he worked as a Japanese teacher at a public high school in Hawaii for 34 years. He still teaches part-time about two days a week.

Chiaki and the other four have visited Japan countless times. He even said he once took his students to Kyushu. And they say they are always discovering something different. She also said that the reason she chose Sendai this time was because, among the four, none had ever been to Sendai before.



First, referring to Mr. S's guide report from 2018, I went to a meeting on May 21, three days before the guide, with a map of Sendai and a rough schedule. Now, on May 24th, the day of the guide, this time I was guided for the first time using a rental car together with Sumio

At Zuihoden, with four guests,

Suzuki. On weekends, the Loople Bus had long waiting times and was packed tightly. Considering visiting not only the city center but also the relics of the Great East Japan Earthquake like the Sendai Kannon, I chose a rental car instead of public transportation. To be honest, this was also Suzuki's suggestion. The schedule includes Zuihoden, Sendai City Museum, (Sendai Castle Ruins), Arahama Elementary School remnants of the Great East Japan Earthquake, Sendai Kannon, Osaki Hachiman Shrine, and Mediatheque. I think it was a guide that only rental cars could provide, which public transportation or taxis couldn't provide.

At Zuihōden, May 24 was the anniversary of Lord Masamune's death, and a memorial service was held. Chanting by the Date family's family temple and related temples. Officials connected to the Sendai domain and others attended, and although they could be viewed from the side of the museum, they were not allowed inside. Therefore, we took a commemorative photo at Kansenden.

At the Sendai City Museum, visitors could carefully view materials related to Sendai's history, art, and culture, UNESCO Memory of the World National Treasure related to the Keicho Embassy, information about Date Masamune and Hasekura Tsunenaga, the Sendai Domain's 620,000 koku, maps created during the Edo period, ukiyo-e, and more. Finally, in the playroom, I wore Masamune's helmet and took a photo. Oh, and by the way, one thing I did at the museum

was that I made a reservation for a restaurant right after I arrived and ate without waiting for lunch.

I cut the Sendai Castle ruins considering the rest of the schedule. Arahama Elementary School, a site relic of the Great East Japan Earthquake, has been well maintained and is fully equipped with English pamphlets, explanations in English, and video presentations, allowing us to learn about the disaster at a relaxed pace.

The Sendai Kannon statue is not from the Aeon Shopping Center side, but if you climb one road (a local bus) to the east, you will see a large Kannon statue in your direction. I thought this was worth a guide.

At Osaki Hachimangu Shrine, I parked my car in the north parking lot and paid my respects at the National Treasure shrine building. After that, I slowly descended the stone steps and got back in the car along Route 48, where the red torii gate stands. After visiting Osaki Hachimangu Shrine, I watched the Mediatheque from the car and returned to the hotel.



At the Sendai City Museum

English just pops out as often as possible. Guiding while driving was tough, but a lot of knowledge I didn't know kept coming up one after another. I was impressed by how often English comes up.

It was also Suzuki-san's suggestion that we buy tickets for the next day's Shinkansen at Kita-Sendai Station instead of Sendai Station. I was able to buy it right away without waiting. Moreover, Chiaki's Japanese was perfect.

While we were on our way to buy tickets, Mr. Suzuki was chatting in the car and was asked, "I've heard that few people in Japan file lawsuits. Why is that?" And although Mr. Suzuki's specialty is law, he felt he needed to study this area. In the end, Mr. Suzuki reportedly replied, "Japanese people basically dislike conflict."

Finally, I'll wrap up with a 'Thank you letter' from Chiaki.

Dear Mr. Matsuda,

We had a wonderful time in Sendai thanks to you and Mr. Suzuki.

We learned so much more and went to so many more places than had we gone on our own. Arahama Elementary School was very emotional and touching for everyone.

Again thank you for everything and please come to Hawaii and let me know when you do.

Best regards to Mr. Suzuki.

Aloha,

Chiaki Look

Sendai International Music Competition (SIMC)

Overview of MGGC Member Activities

Takuo Ito

The 9th Sendai International Music Competition was held from May 24 to June 29 (violin division: May 24~June 8, piano: June 14~June 29). From our association, four people—Sasa, Sato (Wa), Narumo, and myself Ito—volunteered in the participant support section to help manage the event. Below are brief descriptions of each activity and your impressions.

Sasa: Responsible for venue reception and interpretation for Japanese cultural experience events.

Translated an interview with Mr. V, who is from Italy, in a PR magazine. His impression that he wanted to be a good person rather than the future potential of his musical style left a deep impression on me. In Japanese calligraphy, writing names with kanji is especially popular among Westerners. It was his first time holding a brush, and he seemed to be having a great time. From this event onward, the reception venue was set up directly opposite the first-floor concert hall, attracting many people who stopped by before listening to the performance, making it bustling with many people.

Sato (Wa): Responsible for attending performers at school visit mini-concerts and managing the exchange salon.

For the school visit mini-concert, the violin department brought Australian Lian McGowan to Kammachi Elementary School. She mistakenly thought there were other participants and felt sorry for reducing the number of songs, so she added two more songs on the spot. It was a miracle that I was able to prepare sheet music for the pianist in just five minutes.

The piano division was held at Asahigaoka Elementary School, with Japanese student Fuyuka Morinaga and Italian Claudio Bella accompanying us. The children were greatly excited by the powerful piano performance right in front of them, and during the Q&A session after it ended, their hands kept rising one after another, and the concert ended in great excitement. I believe it was a valuable experience for the children.

Naruke: Responsible for in-venue announcements and the networking salon.

I only managed the exchange salon once, and after that, I was assigned to the in-room

announcers known as 'shadow announcers,' so I felt lonely because I had no one to talk to. But if you think about it, the last competition was still a time when the threat of COVID-19 was still being raised, so I guess it was a result of more new volunteers participating this time. You might want to think of it as a good thing. Thank you for your hard work.

Ito: Responsible for performing at the school visit mini-concert and Japanese cultural experience events.

I brought two violinists, Griso from Luxembourg and Brandon from the United States, to Yaotome Elementary School. This is my second time attending the service, following last time. What I felt at that time was the children's surprised expressions when they encountered authentic classical music (which is said to be classical music in English) was truly impressive.

During the Japanese cultural experience, we introduced kendama, a traditional Japanese toy. It seemed difficult for foreigners, and few people had cleared the basic trick of placing it on a single plate.



The four participants this time (at the farewell party in the violin division)

In addition to the above, Mr. Sato (Wa) participated from the planning stage as the leader of the volunteer group, handling tedious tasks such as planning and managing pre-training and coordinating the shifts of many volunteers, making a significant contribution to the competition's management.

This competition is held every three years, with the next event scheduled for 2028. This time, as part of the secretariat's notice, we sent volunteer recruitment information to everyone via email and other means, and only the four participants mentioned above participated. Next time, we hope more members will respond to the recruitment.

Tanabata Interpreter Volunteer

Activity Aggregation

Kazuhiro Goto

Thank you all for your cooperation during the record-breaking heatwave. This is a report on this year's announcement.

The summary table has been reduced to two pages from the next page. This year, there were two locations: Sendai Station and Kotodai Park, so we have tallied them individually. The report also includes guidance and cooperation from high school students participating in the summer vacation volunteer experience. This year, we received 438 visitors, the second highest

number ever (over 400 since 2023, compared to 565 last year).

(*) Information about Tanabata included (pamphlets and fans), hotel and accommodation inquiries, loop buses, night events, the meaning of Tanabata events, coin lockers, and the locations of luggage storage areas. At Kotodai Park, it is said that writing wishes on Tanabata tanzaku and attaching them to bamboo leaves was especially popular.

(*) Due to space constraints, the order is (2) Kotodai Park, then (1) Sendai Station.

2) 国別集計 (勾当台公園案内所)					
	国 名	8月6日	8月7日	8月8日	合 計 (人)
1	アメリカ	4	6	6	16
2	台湾	16			16
3	フランス	3	2	2	7
6	ドイツ			3	3
7	イタリア		4		4
8	イギリス	3	2	1	6
9	スペイン		2	1	3
11	カナダ			3	3
12	スウェーデン				0
13	シンガポール	1			1
14	マレーシア				0
15	オーストラリア	1			1
17	ニュージーランド				0
20	イスラエル	2			2
21	ブラジル			2	2
合計		30	16	18	64

【案内人数内訳】 (勾当台公園)				
内 容	6 日	7 日	8 日	合計 (人)
観光	26	16	15	57
宿泊	0	0	6	6
その他	4	0	2	6
合 計	30	16	23	69

1) 国別集計（仙台駅案内所）					
	国 名	8月6日	8月7日	8月8日	合 計（人）
1	アメリカ	26	11	8	45
2	台湾	24	5	10	39
3	フランス	18	13	11	42
4	中国	17	19	4	40
5	ドイツ	13	10	3	26
6	イタリア	9	8	22	39
7	イギリス	8	8	1	17
8	香港	6	5	15	26
9	メキシコ	6	0		6
10	カナダ	5	1		6
11	オーストラリア	5	0		5
12	オランダ	4	10		14
13	フィンランド	3	0	2	5
14	スウェーデン	2	1		3
15	インドネシア	2	2		4
16	ニュージーランド	2	1		3
17	スペイン	1	9		10
18	シンガポール	1	0	2	3
19	マレーシア	1	7	2	10
20	ロシア	1			1
21	エジプト	1	0		1
22	ケニア	1	0		1
23	エストニア	1	0		1
24	韓国	0	3		3
25	イスラエル	0	4		4
26	バングラデシュ	0	0	2	2
27	キプロス	0	0	1	1
28	チェコ	0	1		1
29	ポーランド	0	1		1
30	ブルネイ	0	1		1
31	ベルギー	0	2		2
32	フィリピン	0	4		4
33	ネパール	0	2		2
34	ポルトガル	0	2		2
35	スリランカ	0		2	2
36	デンマーク	0		2	2
合計		157	130	87	374

【案内人数内訳】（仙台駅）				
内 容	6 日	7 日	8 日	合 計（人）
観光	140	103	80	323
宿泊	9	11	2	22
その他	8	16	5	29
合 計	157	130	87	374

Posts from first-time participants

Participating as a Volunteer Interpreter for the 2025 Sendai Tanabata Festival

Ikuya Ebina

I had been registered with MGGC since last year, but since my participation was limited to year-end parties, I was looking for a chance this year. On Friday, August 8, the last day of the Tanabata volunteer program, my schedule aligned, and I was able to participate for the first time. I worked from 14:00~18:00. Since it lasted four hours consecutively, I thought it might be a bit long before starting, but once it started, it didn't feel very long—not exactly in a flash—and I was able to enjoy participating in the activities.

Sendai is a local area, and before registering with the MGGC, I rarely considered it a tourist destination, but standing at the tourist information booth this time, I was reminded once again that many people visit Sendai for various reasons. Not only from within Japan but also from overseas, visitors to Sendai had seen the situation through news and numbers, but I never had the chance to experience it firsthand. Therefore, just witnessing the many people coming and going at Sendai Station was a very fresh experience.

The most common question we received was, "Where can I watch Tanabata?" It's a fundamental question, but for someone like me who is unfamiliar with tourist information, it was also the most striking question. It's your first time on a new land, and right after stepping onto the station, you wonder which way to go. In places where you're completely unfamiliar with the area, relying solely on your smartphone to walk around can be quite stressful. Since I came to the information center in such a situation and asked for the location, I tried to respond as politely as possible, hoping this first contact might shape my impression of Sendai. Also, I was often asked detailed and specific questions that I couldn't fully research online. For example, questions like "When and where can I buy a certain limited-sale item?", "Where is the ~ stall?", "I have ~ time until departure, but where and what should I do?" Thanks to the help of the people who were at the booth with us, we were able to handle the situation. It was an opportunity that made me feel both the difficulty and the rewarding nature of being guided.

There are also several points to reflect on after participating this time. First of all, I should have studied more Sendai sightseeing information in advance. I wanted to pay more attention than ever to the ever-changing Sendai (not just Miyagi as a whole). Also, I thought maybe I should have paid closer attention to Tanabata myself. The other day, a musician from Aomori who is also connected to Sendai recalled a radio program where he talked about the start of summer festivals in the Tohoku region, saying, "As I've gotten older, I've come to appreciate the charm of the Sendai Tanabata Festival, a 'festival of quiet.'" As time goes by, not only Sendai but I myself will change, so I was reminded of the importance of seizing various opportunities and gaining experience to update my own mind and body. In any case, I was finally able to participate in the MGGC, and it was a meaningful opportunity.

Through volunteer interpretation at Sendai Tanabata,

Nanami Miura

This summer, I volunteered as an interpreter at the Sendai Tanabata Festival. There were many



opportunities for interaction, such as guiding tourists from abroad and explaining the origins of Tanabata. The moment when we were able to communicate and they smiled back was very happy, and I truly felt that our hearts connect across countries and cultures. I was reminded again that by mixing gestures and facial expressions in my story, the language barrier surprisingly lowers.

On the other hand, some issues have become apparent within the directions. Especially at Sendai Station, the signs are hard to understand and there is extremely little English guidance, so I felt that foreigners tend to get lost. I believe improving information boards and notices is an important issue in aiming to become a tourist city.

It was a great joy to be able to share the charm of Sendai while enjoying the gorgeous Tanabata decorations together. I hope to apply the insights gained from this experience to future community development and international exchange.

Response at the station front

Submission from a high school student who helped

Volunteering

M.O.

When I found a flyer for summer volunteers on the school bulletin board, I became interested because I thought it might offer experiences I normally wouldn't have. I immediately picked up the flyer, scanned the QR code, and looked up the activities. Then, I found an organization called the Miyagi Zengi Interpreters Association, which is connected to the Sendai Tanabata Festival and offers opportunities to actually use English, and I wanted to join. The activity involved distributing fans and pamphlets to foreign tourists around Sendai Station during the three days of the Sendai Tanabata Festival. Together with two high school students from the same group, we walked, answered questions, asked



about their country of origin, and collected statistics. It took a lot of courage to start a conversation, and I was anxious, wondering, 'Will my English really get through?' and 'Can I explain the information the other person is looking for well?' There were times when I was happy that my English was conveyed, and other times I was refused to accept fans or brochures, leaving me feeling discouraged, thinking I might be a nuisance. However, I had the opportunity to talk with tourists connected to Miyagi Prefecture, and one person even said, "My child was born in Miyagi Prefecture." I was very happy to meet those people again the next day and remember their faces. Since the number of foreign tourists decreased over the three days, I couldn't really feel any improvement in my activities, but I think the effort I had put into practice in learning English so far and gained much motivation for future studies. If I get the chance in the future, I'd like to try studying abroad at a university as well.

• This is a snapshot of the MGGC members' activities at Sendai Station.



• At Kotodai Park, the tanzaku decorations were popular among foreigners.





訪日客再訪へおもてなし

通訳ボランティアに七夕まつりの見どころを質問する
ウィニーさん(右)



8日開幕した仙台七夕まつりは、円安などを背景に多くのインバウンド(訪日客)でにぎわった。全国の観光地が訪日客の誘致合戦を繰り広げる中、通訳ボランティアや商店街関係者らは「ホスピタリティあふれる街に」と再訪につなげるべく接客に汗を流した。

通訳、丁寧な対応に汗

「七夕も楽しみ。牛タンも食べてみたい」。8日午後1時ごろ、JR仙台駅西口に設置された観光案内所で台湾から訪れたウィニー・シーさん(32)が尋ねた。対応したのは県内の通訳ボランティアでつくる宮城善意通訳者の会(仙台市)のスタッフ。おすすめスポットを英語で説明すると、ウィニーさんは「分かりやすく助かる」とほほ笑み、街に繰り出した。

学生ボランティアを含む6人が対応に当たった。伊東仁(会長70)は「訪日客に仙台を受け入れてもらうには、快く過ごしてもらい必要がある。丁寧な対応で好印象を持ってくれたはずだ」と話した。

藤崎本館(青葉区)で観光案内や免税手続きを担う「仙台ツーリストインフォメーションデスク」は、平時の約2・5倍を超える1日当たり約50人の訪日客が立ち寄った。運営する「まちくるの仙台」は7月、周辺の免税店の特色をまとめた英語表記のカードを作成。文具店、呉服店など16店の商品や営業時間を盛り込み、案内に活用した。

スタッフの小沢香菜さん(39)は「ネットでは見つけられない地元の情報を探めている方も多い。マニアックなポイントも分かりやすく正確に案内するよう心がけている」と話した。

お茶の井ヶ田が運営する喜久水庵仙台中央本店(青葉区)は、まつり期間中にも訪日客が詰めかけた。同店によると、抹茶のパックが最も人気で、通常より3倍ほど売れているという。訪日客の増加に対応すべく、売り場の改善に頭を巡らせるのは後藤新店长(36)。「一目で分かりやすいポップを掲示するなど工夫をして、もっと外国人観光客が利用しやすい店にしたい」と意気込んだ。

(伊藤卓哉、関根梢)

仙台七夕まつり 最終日も活気

(1面に関連記事)

Notice from the Secretariat

About the 40th Anniversary Party

As previously announced by the president's member email, we have planned to hold a 40th anniversary party. We will be holding a dinner event as detailed below, and we kindly ask for the participation of many members.

record

Date and Time: Saturday, October 25, from 11:45 AM

Venue: Kirin Beer Sendai Factory Banquet Room (Restaurant)

Details: A 120-minute all-you-can-drink dinner, along with a 10-year slideshow planned.

Participation Fee: 5,500 yen per person

Meeting Points: The shuttle bus departs at 11:00 from Sendai Station East Exit, in front of Dai Seminar. Please gather before 11 o'clock.

Registration: Please contact President Ito by the end of September.

Please notify us by SMS to 08055542673 or by email to gini@gol.com.

If you have any questions, please contact the above number.

